

## **Using concept maps for evaluation**

Week after next I am leading a team of facilitators in conducting concept mapping sessions for evaluating a three-hour poverty simulation activity. I am attaching materials we will use in this process as I think this use of concept mapping may work for AVP.

I work as evaluation coordinator for an urban public school system in the US. (Metro Nashville, Tennessee). A high proportion of our students come from low economic status families. In addition we have a high proportion of students with varying ethnicities. Currently we have students in our schools who speak over 100 different languages.

My school system has a department devoted to establishing and maintaining family and community partnerships. An unit in the department is set up as an university and provides professional development to our school faculties with workshops on cultural exchanges, refugee resettlement trends, families with diverse religious cultures, family engagement and so on. The poverty simulation is one such course.

Our university has been funded by Teach for America to provide training this summer for 80 new incoming teachers. Teach for America is a Peace Corps type organization that recruits graduating college seniors to teach for a minimum of two years in urban school districts. Teaching is not their major and most attend the more expensive, prestigious colleges and universities. These graduates are given intensive training in teaching methods and classroom management in the summer and are closely mentored during their two years. The poverty simulation was requested by the Teach for America personnel.

My research and evaluation department has taken this as an opportunity to pilot using concept mapping as an evaluation method. If the simulation is effective, then concept maps created after the simulation should be quantifiably different than concept maps created prior to the simulation.

Because of the size of the group and the limited time we have for the post mapping session, we will divide the 80 into 16 groups of five. Each group as a team will develop the pre- and post-maps. During the post session the team will also compare their two maps and draw conclusions about what effect the simulation had on their conceptualizations of poverty and its effect on teaching in Nashville.

I've attached five PDFs, two are one-page, three two-pagers. There are four handouts— how to create a concept map pre session; how to create a concept map, post sessions guide for comparing the two maps; and a rubric for evaluating the learning demonstrated by the maps. The fifth PDF is for the facilitators on the conduct of the sessions.

Hope this will simulate discussion and a critical appraisal.

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